AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-18 (Canceled)

19. (Previously presented) A method for reducing pain sensation comprising:

applying a therapeutically effective amount of an anhydrous gel anesthetic formulation consisting of:

in an anhydrous mixture at least one anesthetic compound selected from the group consisting of procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine, bupivacaine, chloroprocaine, oxyprocaine, mepivacaine, piperocaine, dibucaine, benzocaine, and dyclaine;

a skin penetration enhancer;

a gelling agent with an optional ingredient selected from the group consisting of: preservative, fragrance, buffer, and an emollient; and

an optional therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of: anxiolytic compounds, antiarrhythmics, antibacterials, antibiotics, anticoagulants, anticonvulsants, antifungals, antihistamines, anti-inflammatories, antivirals, bronchodilators, calcium channel blockers, cytotoxics and anticancer agents, cytokines, growth factors, immunosuppressives, muscle relaxants, psychotherapeutics, sympathomimetics, vasodilators, and vitamins;

to the area of an individual's skin to be anesthetized; and

allowing the gel anesthetic to remain in contact with the area for a period of time sufficient to reduce pain sensation.

20. (Previously presented) A method for reducing pain sensation comprising applying a therapeutically effective amount of an anesthetic formulation consisting of:

in an anhydrous mixture at least one anesthetic compound selected from the group consisting of procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine, bupivacaine, chloroprocaine, oxyprocaine, mepivacaine, piperocaine, dibucaine, benzocaine, and dyclaine;

a skin penetration enhancer comprising benzyl alcohol;

a volatile co-solvent;

with an optional ingredient selected from the group consisting of: preservative, fragrance, buffer, and an emollient; and an optional therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of: analgesics, anxiolytic compounds, antiarrhythmics, antibacterials, antibiotics, anticoagulants, anticonvulsants, antifungals, antihistamines, anti-inflammatories, antivirals, bronchodilators, calcium channel blockers, cytotoxics and anticancer agents, cytokines, growth factors, immunosuppressives, muscle relaxants, psychotherapeutics, sympathomimetics, vasodilators, and vitamins;

to the area to be anesthetized.

21-23 (Canceled)

24. (Previously presented) A method of local anesthesia comprising the step of applying to intact oral mucosa a topical anesthetic consisting of:

in an anhydrous mixture at least one anesthetic compound selected from the group consisting of procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine, bupivacaine, chloroprocaine, oxyprocaine, mepivacaine, piperocaine, dibucaine, benzocaine, and dyclaine;

a skin penetration enhancer;

a gelling agent with an optional ingredient selected from the group consisting of: preservative, fragrance, buffer, and an emollient; and

an optional therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of: anxiolytic compounds, antiarrhythmics, antibacterials, antibiotics, anticoagulants, anticonvulsants, antifungals, antihistamines, anti-inflammatories, antivirals, bronchodilators, calcium channel blockers, cytotoxics and anticancer agents, cytokines, growth factors, immunosuppressives, muscle relaxants, psychotherapeutics, sympathomimetics, vasodilators, and vitamins.

25. (Currently amended) The ~~formulation~~ method of claim 19, wherein lidocaine is present from 0.5-6 total weight percent.

26. (Currently amended) The ~~formulation~~ method of claim 19, wherein said skin penetration enhancer is present from 25 to 45 total weight percent.

27. (Currently amended) The ~~formulation~~ method of claim 19 wherein the gelling agent is a cellulosic polymer.

28. (Currently amended) The ~~formulation~~ method of claim 19 wherein the therapeutic agent is an anti-itch.

29. (Currently amended) The ~~formulation~~ method of claim 24, wherein lidocaine is present from 0.5-6 total weight percent.

30. (Currently amended) The ~~formulation~~ method of claim 24, wherein said skin penetration enhancer is present from 25 to 45 total weight percent.

31. (Previously presented) A method for reducing pain sensation comprising:

applying a therapeutically effective amount of an anhydrous gel anesthetic formulation consisting of:

in an anhydrous mixture at least one anesthetic compound selected from the group consisting of procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine, bupivacaine, chloroprocaine, oxyprocaine, mepivacaine, piperocaine, dibucaine, benzocaine, and dyclaine;

a skin penetration enhancer; and

a gelling agent with an optional ingredient selected from the group consisting of: preservative, fragrance, buffer, and an emollient.

32. (Previously presented) A method for reducing pain sensation comprising:

applying a therapeutically effective amount of an anhydrous gel anesthetic formulation consisting of:

in an anhydrous mixture at least one anesthetic compound selected from the group consisting of procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine, bupivacaine, chloroprocaine, oxyprocaine, mepivacaine, piperocaine, dibucaine, benzocaine, and dyclaine;

a skin penetration enhancer;

a gelling agent with an optional ingredient selected from the group consisting of: preservative, fragrance, buffer, and an emollient; and

an optional therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of: alkylamines, ethanolamines, ethylenediamines, phenothiazines, astemazole, loratadine, fexofenadine, cetirizine, camphor, thymol, calamine, crotamiton, aminoglycosides, cephalosporins, vancomycin, lincosamides, macrolides, nitroimidazoles, penicillins, antibiotic polypeptides, and quinolones.

33. (Previously presented) A method of local anesthesia comprising the step of applying to intact oral mucosa a topical anesthetic consisting of:

in an anhydrous mixture at least one anesthetic compound selected from the group consisting of procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine, bupivacaine, chloroprocaine, oxyprocaine, mepivacaine, piperocaine, dibucaine, benzocaine, and dyclaine;

a skin penetration enhancer; and

a gelling agent with an optional ingredient selected from the group consisting of: preservative, fragrance, buffer, and an emollient.

34. (Previously presented) A method of local anesthesia comprising the step of applying to intact oral mucosa a topical anesthetic consisting of:

in an anhydrous mixture at least one anesthetic compound selected from the group consisting of procaine, lidocaine, tetracaine, bupivacaine, chloroprocaine, oxyprocaine, mepivacaine, piperocaine, dibucaine, benzocaine, and dyclaine;

a skin penetration enhancer;

a gelling agent with an optional ingredient selected from the group consisting of: preservative, fragrance, buffer, and an emollient; and

an optional therapeutic agent is selected from the group consisting of: alkylamines, ethanolamines, ethylenediamines, phenothiazines, astemazole, loratadine, fexofenadine, cetirizine, camphor, thymol, calamine, crotamiton, aminoglycosides, cephalosporins, vancomycin, lincosamides, macrolides, nitroimidazoles, penicillins, antibiotic polypeptides, and quinolones.